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# **The Administration's Commitment to Sudan**

**By**

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[The following are excerpts of the testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs, Washington, D.C., July 11, 2002.]

It is indeed an honor to appear again before this Subcommittee, this time to discuss the administration's commitment to bring about a just peace settlement to end the tragic civil war that has raged in Sudan since 1983. I would like to discuss the latest policy developments concerning Sudan, including my recent trip to Khartoum and Nairobi, where I met with the leaders of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Government in Khartoum.

When the administration first laid out its policy towards Sudan, it identified three elements. First, we would deny the use of Sudan by terrorists as a harbor or safe haven. Second, we would ensure humanitarian access to Southern Sudan, and third, support a just and comprehensive settlement of the civil war that has raged there since 1983.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States injected a degree of urgency into our counter-terrorism cooperation with Khartoum. The President defined the government's choice in stark terms: you are either with us, or you are against us. The government appears to have calculated that it could not be against us. While I cannot discuss the sensitive details of their cooperation in this unclassified setting, I can with confidence characterize their current cooperation as acceptable, but as the President said, still more is required.

Our Counter-terrorism Coordinator Ambassador Frank Taylor and I just returned from meetings with the senior leadership in Khartoum on July 2, where we discussed our expectations for continued cooperation. We also made it clear to them that a good record of cooperation in counter-terrorism, vital as it might be, does not provide a free ride on other requirements — particularly humanitarian access and a just peace.

Since February 2002, the authorities in Khartoum have aggravated the human tragedy in Sudan more than usual by denying complete humanitarian access to the famine-threatened region of Western Upper Nile. This is in direct contravention of the terms of the Operation Lifeline Sudan agreement they signed with the United Nations and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). We at the Department of State, our colleagues at USAID, and the President's Special Envoy for Peace former Senator John Danforth have repeatedly protested this failure on the part of the Sudanese government to honor its agreement and to safeguard the well-being of its citizens in southern Sudan. I raised the issue directly with President Bashir and Vice-President Taha in Khartoum on July 2. Bashir offered us humanitarian access to eighteen locations in southern Sudan, including four in Western Upper Nile. I made it clear that we would settle for nothing less than what the government has promised to give us: full and unhindered humanitarian access to all of southern Sudan. I delivered a similar message on our deep disappointment that the government's campaign in the South continues to violate the human rights of its citizens by denying them access to needed humanitarian assistance. I want to take this opportunity to reiterate these messages to the government of Sudan.

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Prospects are quite positive for the peace process that began June 17 in Nairobi. Lieutenant General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, Kenyan army commander, has provided determined and capable leadership for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional organization hosting the talks. Our diplomatic team in Nairobi is providing day-to-day support for the talks. The British, Norwegians, Swiss and Italians are providing similar assistance. Here in Washington, we have assembled an inter-agency Sudan Programs Group headed by a "Chief Operating Officer" for Sudan policy, Ambassador Michael Ranneberger, to manage the day-to-day work of implementing policies and programs related to the peace process. Presidential Envoy for Peace former Senator John Danforth will travel to Europe next week to consult with our European friends and allies on peace process strategy and will encourage increased financial support for humanitarian and peace process operations. Former Senator Danforth plans another trip to Kenya and Sudan next month to encourage continued forward movement in his meetings with Garang, Bashir and other key figures in the peace process.

General Sumbeiywo's objective is to secure agreement by the parties to a framework by the end of the month, and to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement agreement by the end of the year. These are extremely high goals, but he believes they are eminently doable, and that the parties possess the political will to reach agreement. The United States is fully committed to work with the parties to make General Sumbeiywo's goals a reality.

Until the day that a just and comprehensive peace settlement is reached, the cold reality of the civil war in Sudan is that the two parties will continue a policy of talk and fight. Most recently, the SPLA recaptured Kapoeta, and the government took Gogrial. Of greater concern are the allegations of attacks on civilians by the government of Sudan in contravention of the agreement signed in March 2002 by both sides not to target civilians. The fog of war and the scarcity of on-the-ground reporters who can collect and report the facts have made it difficult to verify these claims. To help establish ground truth capacity, I have sent retired Brigadier General Herb Lloyd to Khartoum to establish and head up a verification unit. It will consist of two groups, each with fixed-wing aircraft: one fifteen-person group in the northern area and a ten-person group in the southern area. The mission of each will be to investigate first-hand any reports of attacks on civilians and report their findings to the U.S. government. We will report verified attacks on civilians as violations of the Geneva Code, to which Khartoum is a signatory. More importantly, and of more immediate importance to the Sudanese overnment, we will interpret any such violations as an indication of bad faith vis-à-vis the peace process that will have a direct, negative impact on prospects for improved bilateral relations.

Mr. Chairman, the civilian verification unit to monitor attacks on civilians is only the latest of four initiatives the administration is pursuing to test the seriousness of commitment of the parties to achieving peace, and to create conditions on the ground to help end the vicious cycle of war. The first of these initiatives to be implemented was the cease-fire in the Nuba Mountains, for which we created a Joint Military Commission (JMC) together with the "Friends of the Nuba Mountains," which includes Norway, Britain, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, France and Canada, among others. A Norwegian general, served by Swedish and British deputies, heads the JMC. As a result of the stabilizing influence that the JMC's verification efforts have brought, we have seen something approaching a return of normalcy to the Nuba Mountains. Internally displaced people are returning to their homes. Normal economic activity is resuming. Prisoners of war are being exchanged. Goods and people are moving across the cease-fire lines.

We have received word from both sides that they agreed to a six-month extension of the cease-fire through January 2003, whereupon they would under the terms of the agreement consider another extension. I will chair a meeting of the "Friends of the Nuba Mountains" at senior level here in Washington on July 31. It will evaluate the work of the JMC, outline its work for the next six months, and encourage other countries to support the JMC's work both financially

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and with the transfer of uniformed military officers to staff the JMC. The success of the Nuba Mountains cease-fire gives us tangible indications of what a comprehensive peace agreement could accomplish not only in the South, but throughout all of the Sudan.

Another of our initiatives was the creation of an international group of eminent persons, chaired by former Deputy Director of USIA Penn Kemble and Ambassador George Moose, which traveled to the Sudan to investigate slavery and issued a series of concrete recommendations for eliminating this nefarious practice. It refuted the Khartoum government's weak assertion that there is no slavery in Sudan, as well as the equally weak assertions of some European intellectuals that what we call slavery is nothing more than a traditional practice of abductions.

The commission's report, available on the Department of State website, made it clear that slavery exists in the Sudan, and that the Khartoum regime uses slavery as a tool in its war on the people of southern Sudan. We are now in the implementation phase, and are considering ways that the civilian verification unit can be used to investigate and report the incidence of slave raids by the Khartoum government and its militia allies.

The fourth and final initiative was the "Days and Zones of Tranquility," under which both sides would allow government and non-governmental organization personnel to vaccinate people and animals against polio, rinderpest and guinea worm in southern Sudan. I understand that the effort was successful in protecting thousands of people against polio. The Khartoum government and SPLA have hindered progress with the rinderpest and guinea worm inoculations. USAID and non-governmental organizations continue to administer vaccinations where they can, while we have made it clear to both parties that we expect them to honor their agreements to permit access to the other affected regions.

Let me say a few words about Sudan's efforts to improve its status as a neighbor in the sensitive Greater Horn of Africa neighborhood. Khartoum has demonstrated a desire to improve regional stability through support for Ugandan efforts to free the captives of the terrorist Lord's Resistance Army and capture its renegade leader, Joseph Kony. The Sudanese government reversed its policy of support for Kony and the LRA by allowing the Ugandan military to hunt the LRA in southern Sudan with the help of Khartoum's military. While this reversal of support for a prominent, destabilizing terrorist organization is promising, the international community awaits the results of this effort.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close my prepared testimony by assuring you that the Bush Administration is committed to ending the cycle of violence and suffering in Sudan by pursuing a just and comprehensive peace in Sudan. We support the Senate version of the *Sudan Peace Act*, which shares those same goals. Our approach is to focus on the big-picture process of achieving a just and comprehensive end to the war and suffering in Sudan, and not to become bogged down on a divisive issue that would do little to advance the cause of peace. This will remain our position so long as we judge that the Sudanese government is serious about the peace process.